O'BRIEN
Appl. No. 10/052,107
January 12, 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 4-6 as follows.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-3. (cancelled)

4. (currently amended) A method of hardening ATM cells, the ATM cells each including a header and payload, the method including the steps of:

encoding the header and payload within an individual transmission frame,

~~wherein~~interleaving the header and payload ~~are interleaved~~ within an individual transmission frame,

~~wherein~~applying error correction ~~is applied~~ separately to the header and the payload prior to interleaving them within a transmission frame, and

~~wherein the~~using Reed Solomon forward error correction ~~corresponds to Reed Solomon forward~~for said error correction.

5. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 4 ~~wherein,~~ including applying the Reed Solomon encoding ~~is applied~~ to the header and payload separately, and interleaving ~~following which~~ the encoded header ~~is interleaved~~ with the encoded payload.

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6. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 4, including eliminating/using wherein empty/idle ATM cells are eliminated/used to substantially match input and output rates of an ATM link.

7. (cancelled)

8. (previously presented) An apparatus adapted for hardening ATM cells in accordance with the method of claim 4.

9. (cancelled)

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